Claims

1. A method of prophylaxis and/or treatment of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome which comprises administering to an individual in need thereof a composition which comprises a prophylactically or therapeutically effective amount of at least one collectin and/or ficolin subunit, or at least one collectin and/or ficolin oligomer comprising the collectin and/or ficolin subunit.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the composition comprises at least one mannan- binding lectin (MBL) oligomer comprising the at least one mannan-binding lectin(MBL) subunit.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said oligomer is selected from the group of oligomers consisting of tetramers, pentamers and hexamers.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the individual has a serum level of MBL in excess of 10 ng/ml serum.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the individual has a serum level of MBL in excess of 50 ng/ml serum.

6. The method of claim 4 or 5, wherein the serum MBL level is the functional serum MBL level.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising the administration of an antimicrobial medicament capable of attenuation and/or elimination of a microbial species.

8. The method of claim 7 in which the antimicrobial medicament is an antibacterial medicament.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the MBL subunit or the MBL oligomer is produced in a native host organism.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the native host organism is a human cell natively expressing the MBL subunit or the MBL oligomer.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the MBL subunit or MBL oligomer is produced by a host organism not natively expressing an MBL polypeptide.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the MBL subunit or the MBL oligomer is produced by a method comprising at least one step of recombinant DNA technology in vitro.

13. The method of claim 11 or 12, wherein the production of the MBL subunit or the MBL oligomer is controlled by an expression control sequence not natively associated with MBL polypeptide expression.

14. The method of any of claims 9 to 13, wherein the MBL subunit or the MBL oligomer is isolated from the host organism.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the MBL subunit or the MBL oligomer is isolated by a method comprising at least one step involving affinity chromatography.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein the affinity chromatography step is capable of isolating MBL tetramers, pentamers and/or hexamers from a composition further comprising additional MBL oligomers and/or MBL subunits.

17. The method of any of claims 11 to 16, wherein the MBL subunit and/or the MBL oligomer is free from any impurities naturally associated with the MBL when produced in a native host organism.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein the MBL subunit is a mammalian MBL subunit.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the mammalian MBL subunit is a human MBL subunit.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein the composition is administered to the individual prior to another treatment.

21. The method of any of the preceding claims, wherein the administration is prophylactic.

22. The method of any of claims 1-21, wherein the composition is a booster of MBL serum levels in an individual having MBL serum levels above a predetermined minimum MBL serum level of 10 ng/ml.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the individual has MBL serum levels below a predetermined maximum MBL serum level of 500 ng/ml.

24. The method of claim 1 or 23, wherein the individual has serum levels of MBL in excess of 75 ng/ml.

25. The method of claim 1 or 23, wherein the individual has serum levels of MBL in excess of 100 ng/ml.

26. The method of claim 1 or 23, wherein the individual has serum levels of MBL in excess of 150 ng/ml.

27. The method of claim 1 or 24, wherein the individual has serum levels of MBL below 500 ng/ml.

28. The method of claim 1 or 24, wherein the individual has serum levels of MBL below 400 ng/ml.

29. The method of claim 1 or 24, wherein the individual has serum levels of MBL below 300 ng/ml.

30. The method of any of the preceding claims, wherein serum or plasma levels of MBL in the individual are determined by quantitative analysis.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the analysis comprises at least one of ELISA, TRIFMA, RIA or nephelometry.

32. A method of using an MBL composition for preventing and/or reducing SARS in an individual, the method comprising the steps of:

a) determining serum levels of MBL in an individual,

b) estimating the probability of the occurrence of a significant clinical SARS in the individual, and optionally,

c) administering an MBL composition to the individual.

33. The method of claim 1 in which at least one collectin and/or ficolin subunit is a mannan binding lectin (MBL) subunit.

34. The method of any one of claims 1-20 wherein the administration is therapeutic.